

## Soaring service

*Alumna helps create Young Eagles*

BY SARAH MEAD ('99)

**S**hirley Steele ('63) has taken community service to new heights. Following her retirement from teaching in 2000, Steele became interested in the Experimental Aircraft Association. "One of the major programs of EAA is to give kids their first airplane ride," she says. "Once the child between ages 8 and 17 has flown, he or she is considered a Young Eagle, and the participant's name is placed in the most extensive logbook in the world. Our organization has given free flights to approximately 650 to 700 kids since 2006.

The program also has a scholarship program where two participants are sent to a week-long NASA Space Challenge camp in Huntsville, Ala. "They get a full-blown introduction into the world of flying, and it is guaranteed to change their lives." Steele says. "Our scholarship was set up to honor former World War II Air Force service pilot Emily Metz Giles, who passed away in 2008."

"A desire to help the community and give back something to the area in which we grew up is very special to us," says Steele.

A business education major, Steele has kept herself active since her graduation more than 40 years ago. She earned her master's in education with a concentration in instructional applications of microcomputers from George Mason University.

In addition to her EAA service, Steele is vice president of the Woodlawn Ruritan Club, and she has been voted Outstanding Ruritan of the Year two years in a row. She maintains the Web sites for the Woodlawn Ruritan Club,

the Carroll County Teachers Association, the Woodlawn United Methodist Church, Chapter 1426 of the Experimental Aircraft Association, the Young Eagles organization and the Carroll County Historical Society. She also serves as the treasurer of her church's United Methodist Women's

Group and is on the Parish Relations Committee of Woodlawn United Methodist Church. Beyond her multiple webmaster duties and church service, Steele serves as editor of the Carroll County Historical Society's magazine, *The Carroll County Chronicles*.

Steele became a devoted volunteer after she retired from teaching in several high schools and elementary schools, and after raising her two sons. She moved to California with her husband, who was in the Air Force. She taught fourth grade for two years, and then she and her husband relocated to Wycombe, England. Later, the Steeles moved back to Virginia, and Shirley returned to

teaching business education in Fairfax County in 1977.

Steele believes that Madison certainly prepared her for the real world. "Being from a small rural area, it was a major adjustment to fit into Madison College," she explains. "I always strived to do my best. When Madison's truly dedicated professors realized that a student was doing her best, they were willing to help any student achieve." ■



**Experimental Aircraft Association volunteers Shirley and Bob Steele depart from the 2006 Young Eagles Rally at Rotometrics Airport in Meadows of Dan, Va.**



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— SHIRLEY STEELE ('63), EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER